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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 ISO-00 EUR-08 IO-04 SS-15 SP-02 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 CIAE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00 RSC-01

L-02 AID-05 /070 W

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R 221335Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3557

INFO ARAB SUMMIT CONFERENCE 003

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 5143

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR XF MO

SUBJECT: ARAB LEAGUE FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING TO OPEN
OCTOBER 22

1. SUMMARY. ARAB FON MINS SCHEDULED BEGIN DELIBERATIONS AFTERNOON OCT 22. OPENING SESSION WILL CONSIST OF CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, MOROCCAN WELCOME AND PRESENTATION OF ARAB LEAGUE REPORT. ARAB LEAGUE SEC GEN RIAD HAS ANNOUNCED THAT SUMMIT WILL CONCENTRATE ON LIBERATING ARAB LANDS, RE-ESTABLISHING PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, ARAB ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND ARAB DIALOGUE WITH EUROPE AND AFRICA. HEAVY PRESS PLAY ON PALESTINIANS CONTINUES. RUMOR MILL SPECULATION CENTERS ON LIBYAN PARTICIPATION AND ON REASONS FOR APPARENT DELAY IN OPENING OF FONMINS MEETING. MOROCCAN SECURITY PRECAUTIONS REMAIN VERY TIGHT AND AUTHORITIES ARE JITTERY. END SUMMARY.

2. ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS SCHEDULED BEGIN DELIBERATIONS ON AFTERNOON OF OCTOBER 22. WITH EXCEPTION OF LIBYANS AND UGANDANS, ALL DELEGATIONS NOW HERE. (UGANDA, AS NON-ARAB LEAGUE COUNTRY, WILL REPORTEDLY PARTICIPATE ONLY IN SUMMIT ITSELF.) PLO AND OAU REPRESENTATIVES ALSO PRESENT FOR FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING. OPENING SESSION WILL BE ATTENDED BY PRESS AND DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES AND WILL BEGIN WITH
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OPENING REPORT BY LEBANESE FOREIGN MINISTER, WHO WILL CHAIR

FON MIN'S MEETING SINCE LEBANON IS CURRENT ARAB LEAGUE CHAIRMAN. FOLLOWING HIS PRESENTATION, MOROCCAN FONMIN LARAKI IS TO WELCOME MINISTERS AND ARAB LEAGUE SEC GEN MAHMOUD RIAD WILL THEN READ ARAB LEAGUE REPORT.

3. RIAD, WHO ARRIVED IN RABAT OCT 18, MET WITH KING HASSAN ON OCT 21. FOLLOWING MEETING HE ANNOUNCED THAT BOTH FONMINS AND CHIEFS OF STATE WOULD CONCENTRATE ON "MEANS OF LIBERATING ARAB LANDS AND RE-ESTABLISHING LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE" AND ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF ARAB COUNTRIES. HE ALSO SAID THAT ARAB-EUROPEAN AND ARAB-AFRICAN DIALOGUES WOULD BE DISCUSSED. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT SUMMIT WOULD PERMIT POSITIVE RESULTS, WHICH SHOULD BE FACILITATED BY WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS "GOOD RELATIONS" CURRENTLY PREVAILING AMONG ARAB STATES.

4. REFLECTING CLEAR POSITIVE BIAS TOWARD PALESTINIANS EVIDENT IN RECENT MEDIA TREATMENT, ARRIVAL OF PLO DELEGATION TO FONMIN'S MEETING WAS PROMINENTLY FEATURED IN SEMI-OFFICIAL AND OPPOSITION PRESS. DELEGATION, LED BY FARUQ QADDUMI, ALSO INCLUDES ABDERAZZAK AL YAHIA, SAID KAMAL AND NABIL AL RAMLAOUI. SEMI-OFFICIAL MAROC ARABE PRESSE ITEM ORIGINATING BEIRUT REPORTS "PALESTINIAN AGENCY" AS ANNOUNCING DELEGATION TO CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF STATE WILL BE LED BY ARAFAT. OTHER MEMBERS REPORTEDLY WILL INCLUDE ZUHAYR MUHSIN, CHIEF OF MILITARY DIVISION; YASIR ABU RIBBU, CHIEF OF DIVISION OF NATIONAL AFFAIRS AND REPATRIATION; TALAL NAJI, OFFICIAL PLO SPOKESMAN; AND GENERAL MUSTAFA AL-BIDAIRI, LIBERATION ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF.

5. AS TO BE EXPECTED, RABAT RUMOR MILL IS WORKING OVERTIME IN CONNECTION WITH SUMMIT. ONE AREA OF CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION IS LIBYAN PARTICIPATION. IT IS TAKEN FOR GRANTED THAT LIBYA WILL BE REPRESENTED AT LEAST AT LOWER THAN CHIEF OF STATE LEVEL, PERHAPS BY JALLOUD. DIPLOMATIC SOURCE WITH GOOD ACCESS HAS TOLD US CATEGORICALLY, HOWEVER, THAT QADHAFI, ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL MOROCCAN SOURCES, WILL PERSONALLY ATTEND. AS OF WEEKEND, ON OTHER HAND, HIGH-LEVEL MFA SOURCES WERE STILL NOT SURE ABOUT LIBYAN REPRESENTATION, COMMENTING THAT, IF QADHAFI DID COME, IT WOULD BE CHARACTERISTIC

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OF HIM TO DO SO WITHOUT PRIOR ANNOUNCEMENT. THEY ALSO GAVE IMPRESSION THAT GOM WOULD NOT BE OVERLY DISAPPOINTED IF QADHAFI STAYED AT HOME, AS CONFERENCE LIKELY TO GO MUCH MORE SMOOTHLY WITHOUT HIM.

6. THERE IS ALSO SOME QUESTION, ACCORDING TO LOCAL SUMMIT WATCHERS, AS TO TIMING OF OPENING OF SUMMIT. ONE WIDESPREAD RUMOR IS THAT OPENING WILL BE DELAYED BY ONE DAY. BEGINNING

OF FONMIN'S MEETING, REPORTED BY SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS NOW AS 1700 LOCAL OCT 22, MAY HAVE SLIPPED FROM PREVIOUSLY EXPECTED MORNING OPENING, PERHAPS TO ALLOW MORE TIME FOR LIBYAN ARRIVAL. WE WOULD NOT NECESSARILY ATTRIBUTE SUCH SLIPPAGE TO SUBSTANTIVE PROBLEMS, HOWEVER, AND ANTICIPATE A FAIR AMOUNT OF CONFUSION IN CONNECTION WITH ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS AND COORDINATION, AS IN PAST RABAT GATHERINGS OF THIS KIND.

7. MEANWHILE, MOROCCAN SECURITY PRECAUTIONS ARE PREDICTABLY VERY TIGHT. MFA PRESS LIAISON OFFICER EXPRESSED CONCERN TO US ABOUT DANGER OF INFILTRATION INTO CONFERENCE BY "OPPOSITION ELEMENTS". HE SAID PRESS CARDS ISSUED OCT 22 MIGHT WELL HAVE TO BE CHANGED LATER SAME DAY, TO FORESTALL POSSIBILITY OF USE OF COUNTERFEIT CARDS TO GAIN ENTRANCE TO SESSIONS. PROPORTIONS OF SECURITY PROBLEM ARE REFLECTED IN FACT THAT 540 CORRESPONDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO BE COVERING PROCEEDINGS. DELEGATIONS TO SUMMIT ARE ALSO TO BE SIZEABLE--WE UNDERSTAND EGYPTIANS WILL HAVE 104 AND SAUDIS 140 DELEGATION MEMBERS. NEUMANN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING AGENDA, SUMMIT MEETINGS, MINISTERIAL MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974RABAT05143
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740301-0109
From: RABAT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741027/aaaaawmx.tel
Line Count: 135
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 AUG 2002 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <06 MAR 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ARAB LEAGUE FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING TO OPEN OCTOBER 22
TAGS: PFOR, XF, MO, AL
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005